SYSTEMATIC REVIEW AND STAKEHOLDER ROADMAP FOR FRESHWATER POLICIES IN THE PERUVIAN AMAZON

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Andean-Amazonian watersheds play an important role in biodiversity conservation and human wellbeing. They provide an important source of food and freshwater, perform critical ecosystem services, and create corridors for local wildlife and endangered species. Similarly, riparian communities living along these watersheds depend on the resources they provide for their livelihoods, making them vulnerable to negative impacts from gold mining and the encroachment of human development, such as the construction of hydroelectric dams. These ecosystems and river species, in turn, depend on their human inhabitants to adopt practices that will ensure their long-term health and functioning. Conservationists have long struggled to make their recommendations practicable for the actual communities they target. When met with the economic, social, and cultural realities on the ground, the pathway from theory to practice often fails to materialize. Such failures generate antagonism between initiatives aimed at conservation goals, like reducing deforestation, and social goals, such as ending poverty for local communities.

In Perú, this antagonism manifests itself in the effort to align freshwater management practices and policies with the social and economic realities of riparian communities. One strategy for resolving this tension is to conduct more integrative empirical research using evidence-based and participatory methodologies to analyze current freshwater policies and obtain more accurate data about the factors driving communities' decisions regarding the use of freshwater resources.

To achieve this, I propose to evaluate the evidential basis and justification for the current freshwater policies within the Marañon watershed by conducting a meta-analysis of literature, stakeholder analysis, and key informant interviews. I aim for my research to increase the effectiveness of these freshwater policies and improve outcomes for both people and ecosystems.

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